

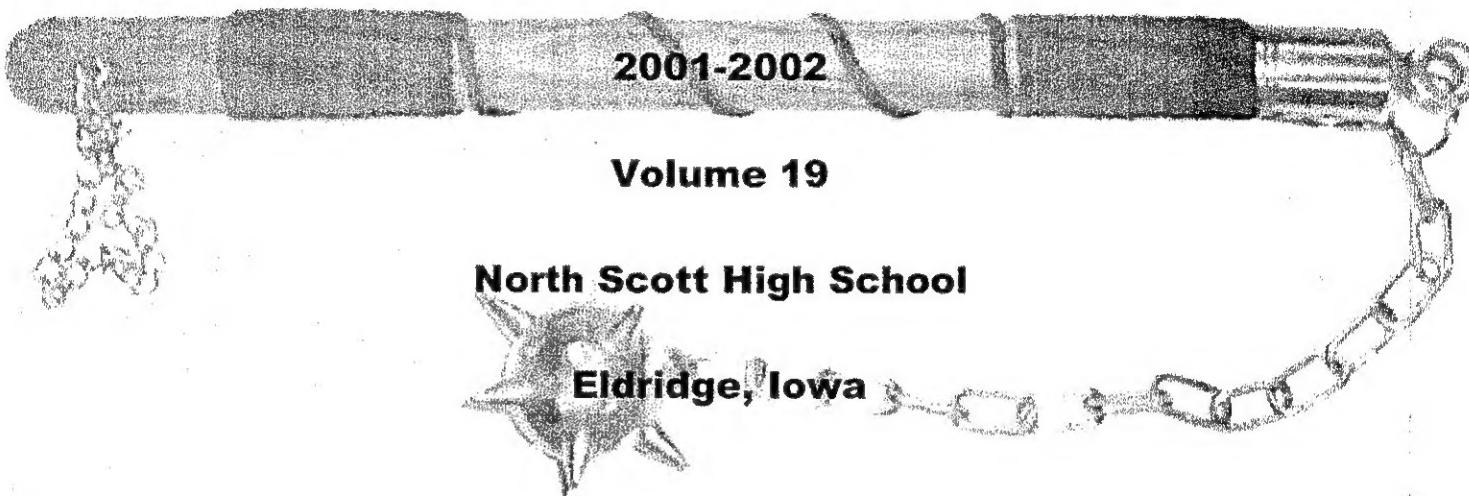
Morning Star



2001-2002
Volume 19

The Morning Star

The Morning Star is a medieval weapon consisting of a heavy ball set with spikes and either attached to a staff or suspended from a chain.



2001-2002

Volume 19

North Scott High School

Eldridge, Iowa

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Special thanks to Bernie Peeters and Joni Schneider, North Scott High School Art Department.

Sponsored by the North Scott High School Language Arts Department

Cover Art by Abby Wiese





Christina Harrington
- Junior -



POETRY



Geometry can produce legible
letters but art alone makes
them beautiful.

Art begins where geometry
ends and imparts to letters
a character transcending
mere measurement.

**Shawn Spencer
10th Grade**

FIVE HAÏKUS TO REPRESENT ME

Alyssa Bobst

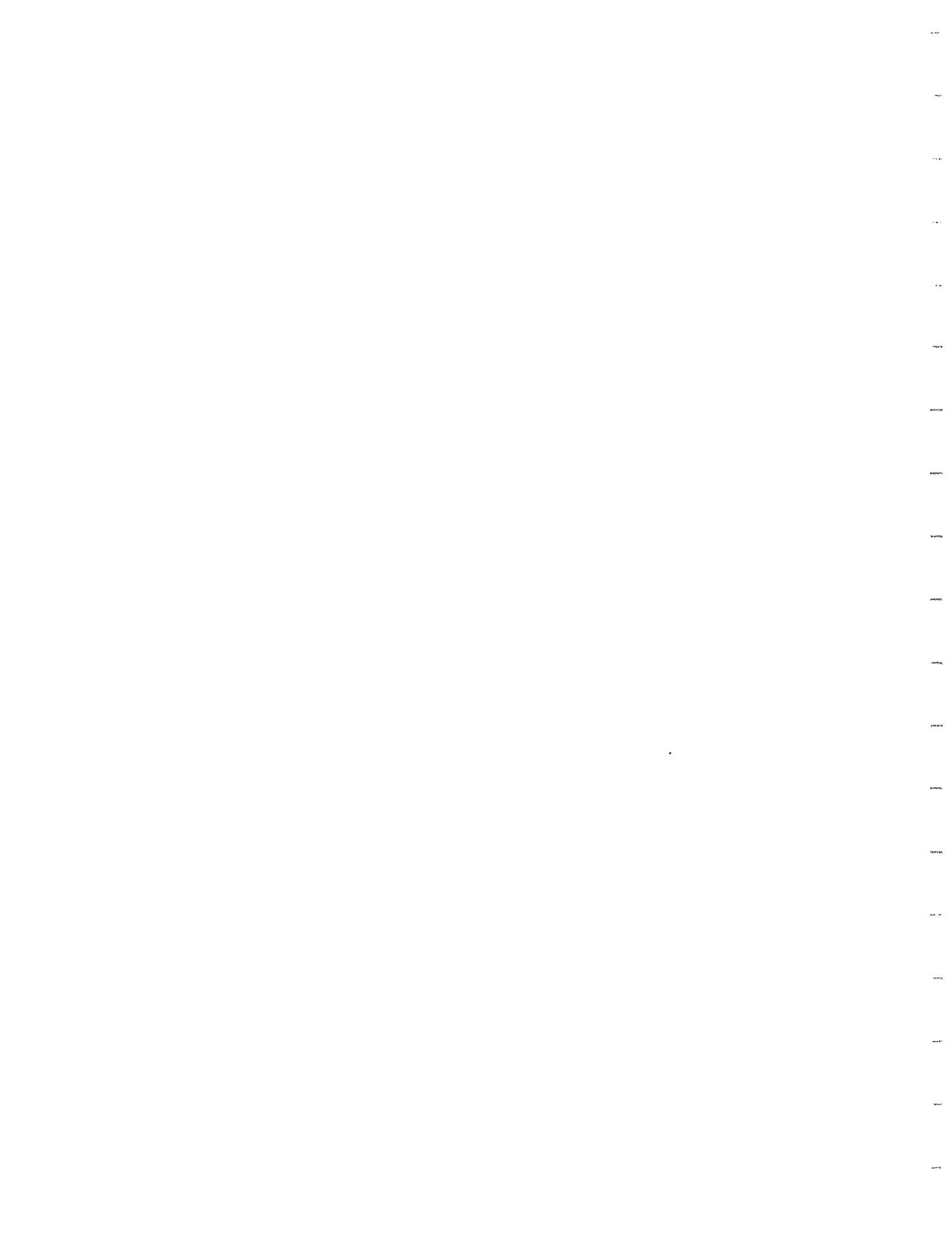
Look at the night sky,
It's amazing what we see
A whole world beyond.

London, Paris, Rome
Around the world I will go
To see everything

Wonderful to be
A reader of poetry
All the while free

Watching the sun set
Bright red and orange and yellow
Is magnificent.

Je suis en français
Je suis allé à la France
J'adore des langues.





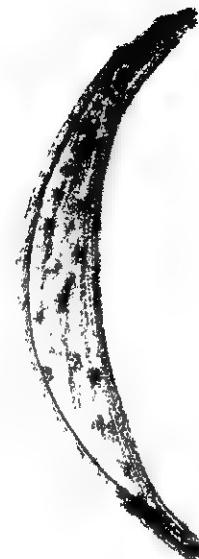
Jeni Wilford
12th Grade

SUN

Our sun is helpful
It brightens the day nicely
And makes people smile

MOON

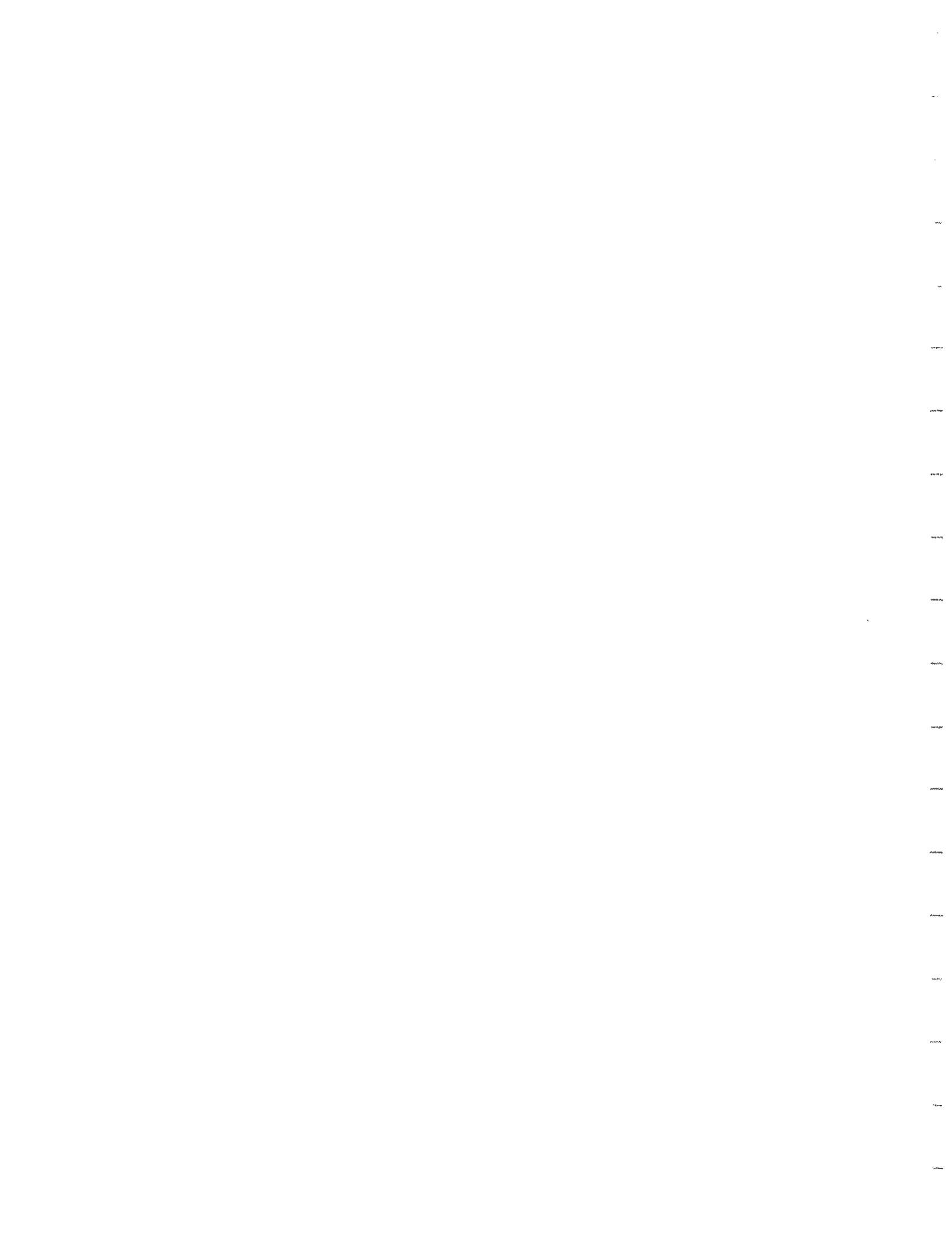
You light up the night
waning and waxing you do
To keep scheduled



STARS

How lovely are thee
You are so very beautiful
Twinkle just for me

by Emily E. Kuhl

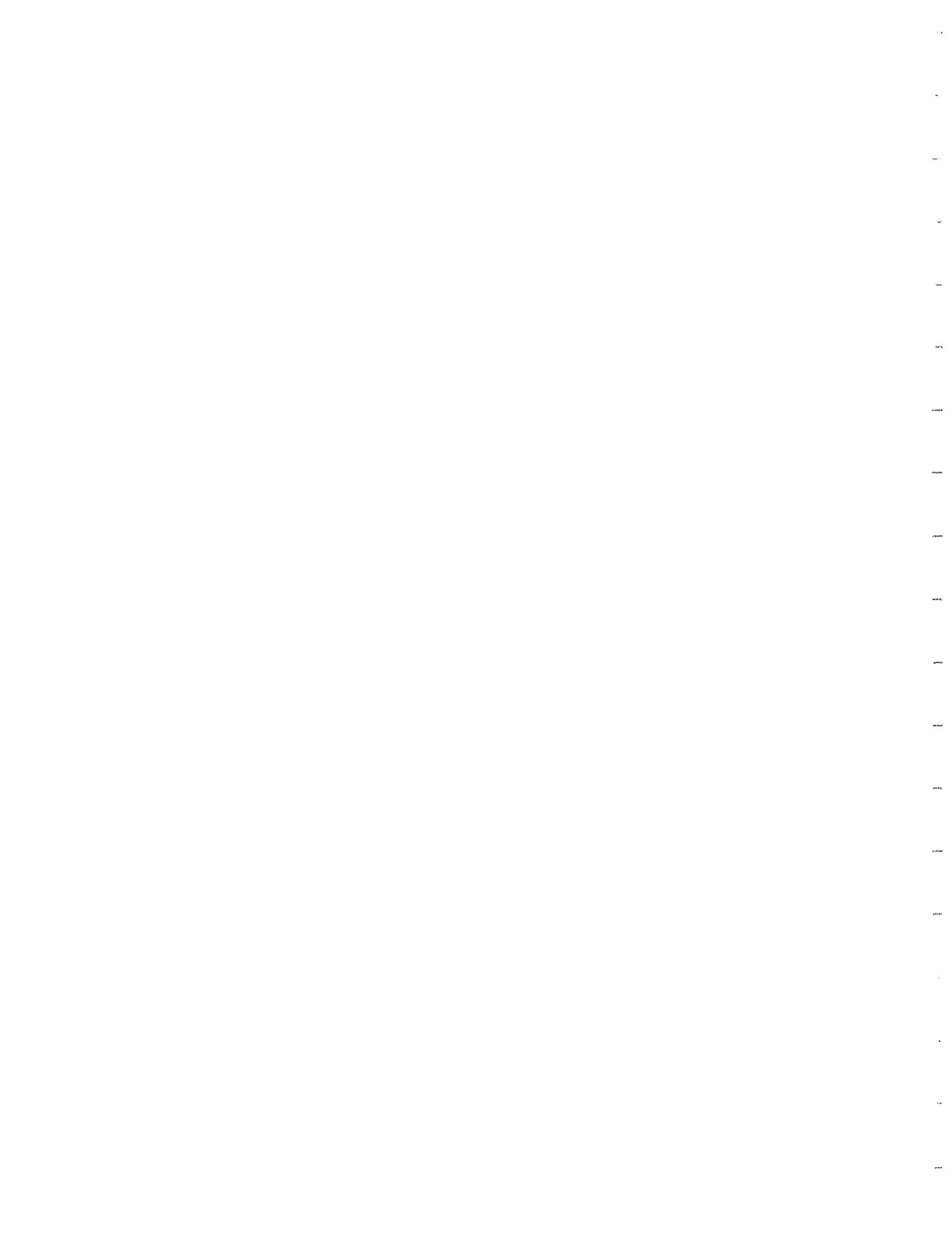


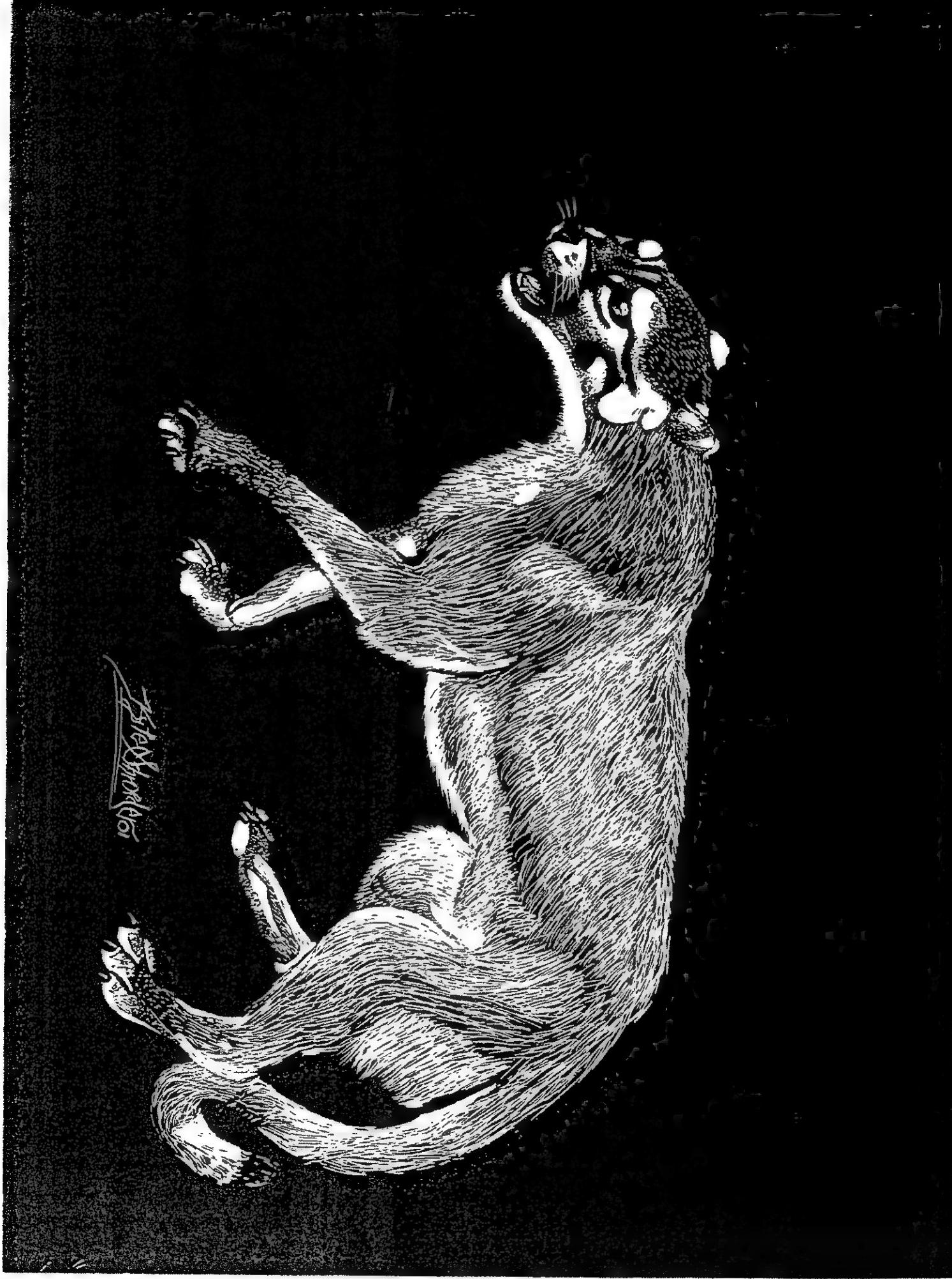


Shawn Spencer
10th Grade

The smell, the light, the way you whispered
Etched in my mind forever
Manipulation, broken trust
Exploited fragility
Innocence stolen, pulled away
Trust died in that room
Buried deep within creeping shadows
never to be forgotten, completely forgiven
Haunting the darkest corners of my mind
Escape is near, but the room lingers
Childlike innocence surrenders
Dry tears scratch my face
Crashing upon a desolate road
Each trail like a ribbon--twisting, unstable
Paths split, frayed in each direction
Overwhelmed I stand motionless
Hopeful eyes plead to the sky
I find myself flying--glance down to the road
The stars--heaven's choir--sing musicless songs
Pain dissolves, I sleep on the sky
Abruptly waking--torn away
Plumeting back to the path
I can't move, locked in the cycle
Eternal slave to the memory

-Christina Harrington-





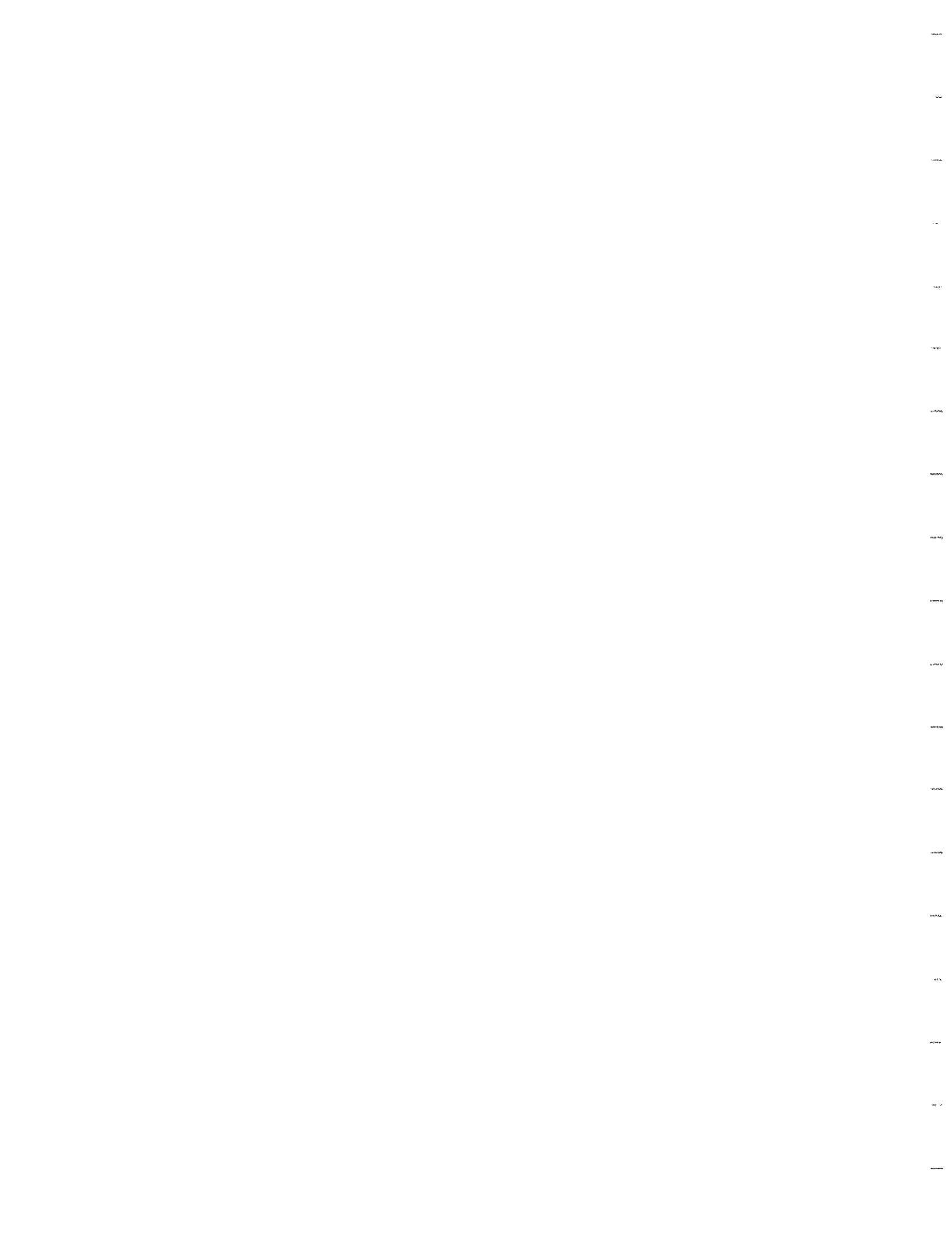
Kyle Schroeder
11th Grade



The Beauty

As the sun comes up in the morning the
Dew on the flower petals drips and dries off.
The flower opens up and birds sing their sweet songs of spring.
The bees come out into the light to sip
The sweet nectar from the colorful plants.
The Warm breeze blows and creates a dance with the floweres.
And the beauty of the earth appears in each new day







Chelsea Schwarz
10th Grade

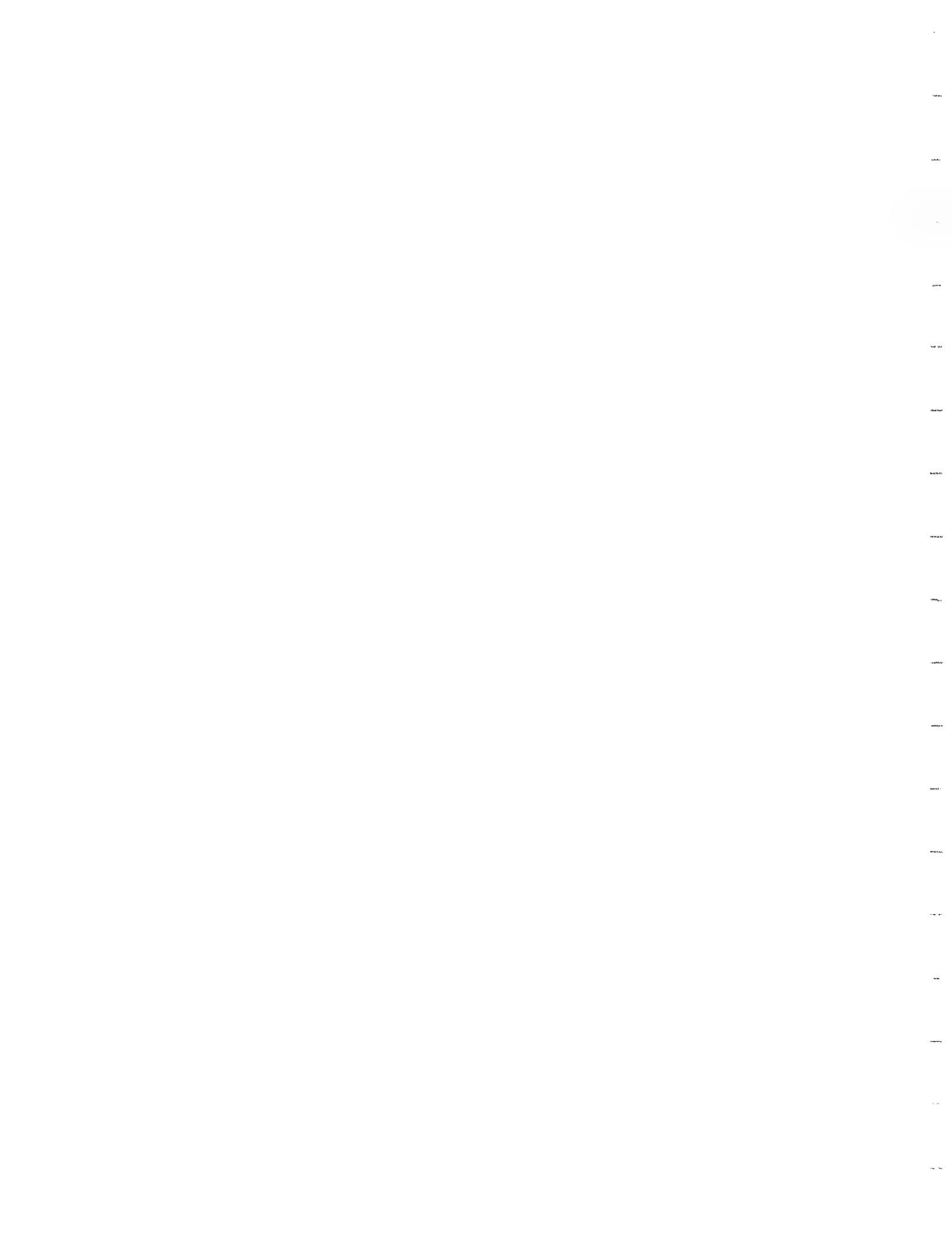
Memories

When times have changed,
and people moved on,
a memory is never gone.

The scene flashes in your head,
daydreaming in school, or in bed.
Filled with laughter, joy, and tears,
more and more, through the years.

All these thoughts let you see,
how wonderful is a memory.

Lisa Kirby
Senior





Alvaro DiBernardo
12th Grade

Once Upon a Dream

*Star light
Star bright
Hear the dream
I had tonight*

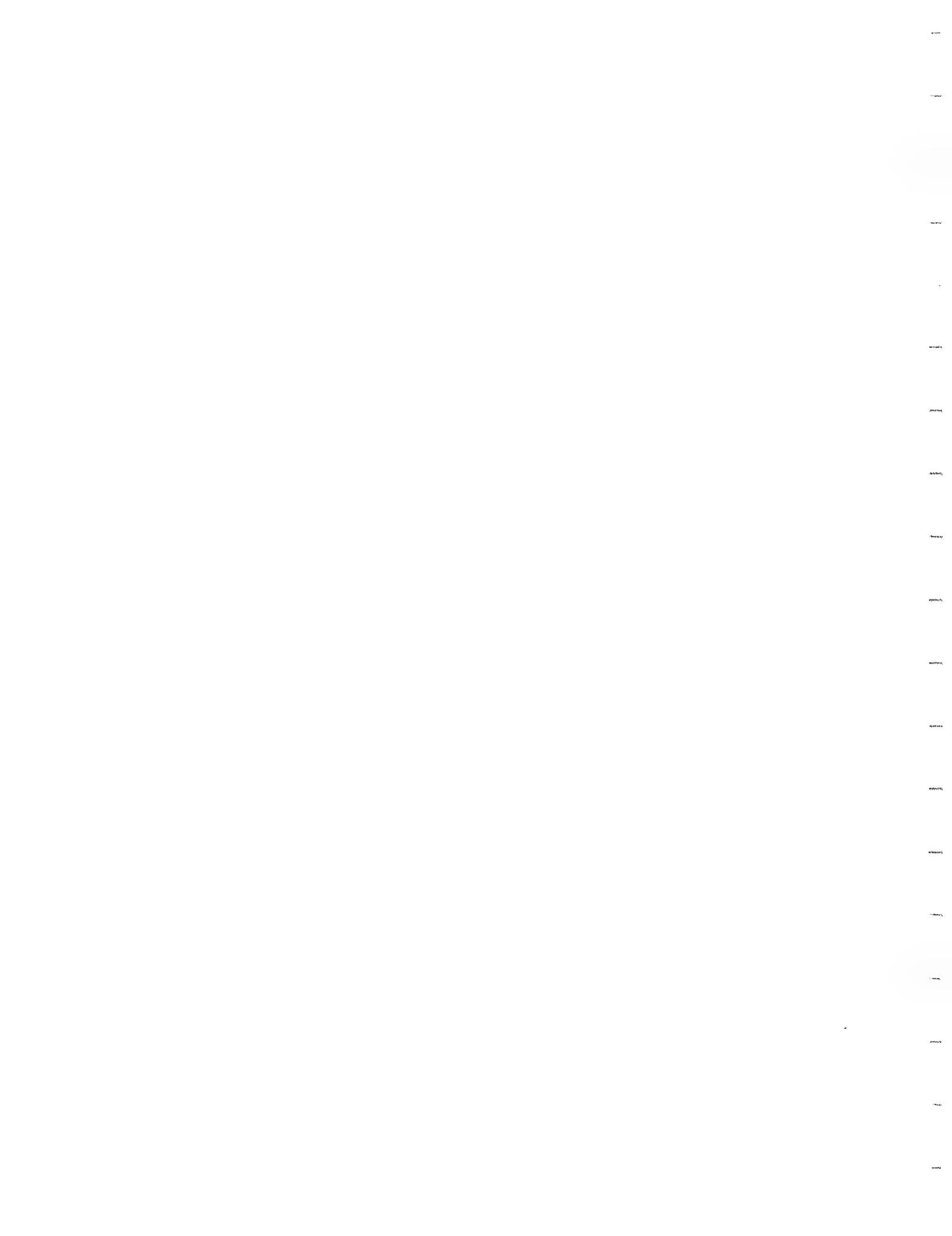
*Once upon a time
When we were friends
He'd comfort me
And hold my hands*

*He talked to me
Without being shy
Which made him
A special guy*

*We never fought
We only cared
I was taught
By what we shared*

*The times we shared
Are no longer there
For they happened one night
Once upon a dream*

Megan Devine
Junior



"Quick Six"

*There once was a kid
Who could't remove his lid*

*He played football for North Scott
where the biggest player was a kid named Ott*

*He started the season playing cornerback
untill he injured his lower back*

*He got his nickname by
watching receivers run right bye.*

*By the end of the year
he showed great fear*

*He only had one good game
which brought him little fame*

*At the end of the season he still thought he was great
but the rest of the team knew his actual fate*

Jared Hamilton
Senior

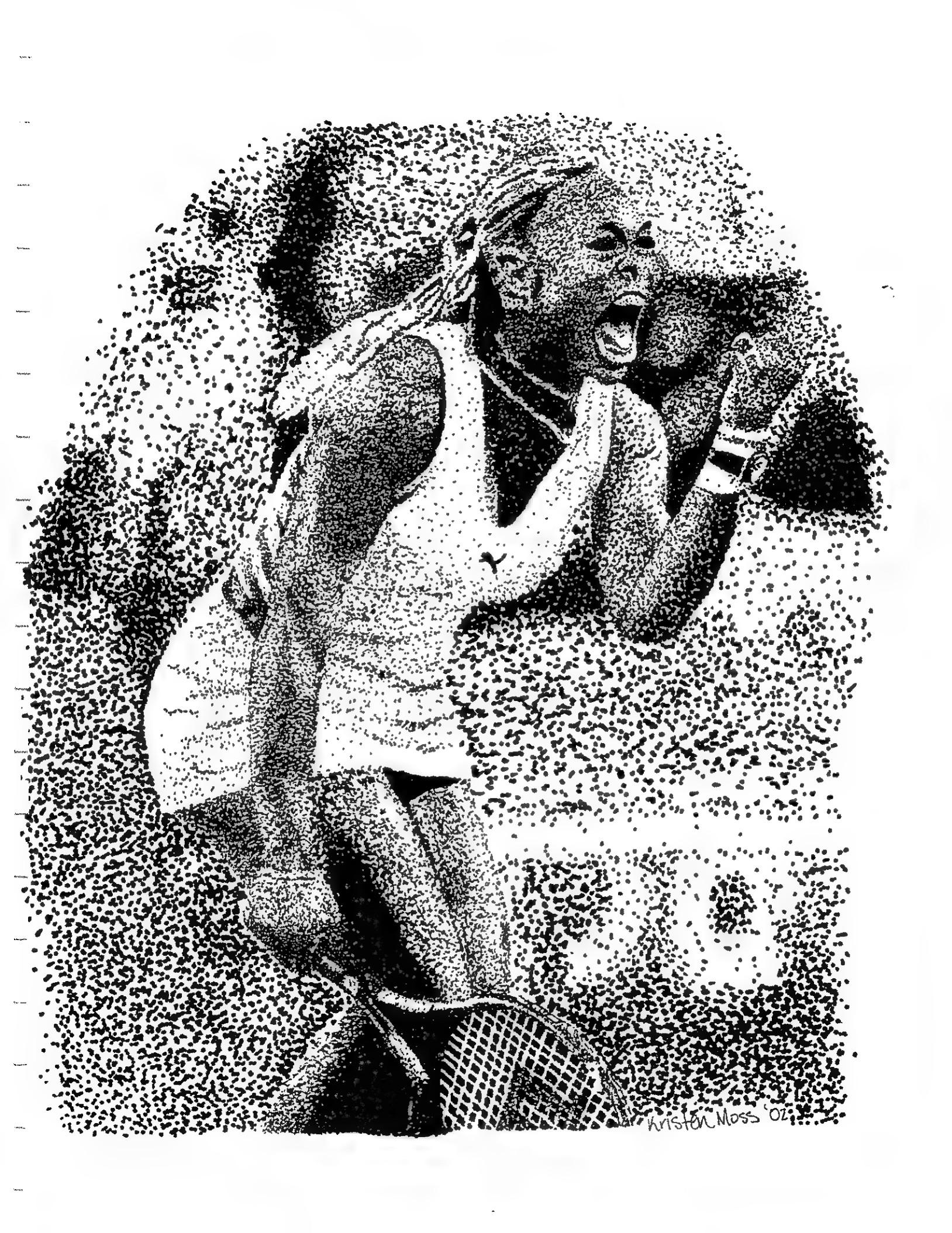


Opening Day

*You wake up extra early this day
You just want to play the game of the day
Everyone will be there
Cheering and all
Waiting for you to hit the ball
You see your mom behind the plate :
With the camera directly on you
The coach gives you the sign to take
But you'd rather swing away
and not be late
You won't be late for that very pitch
The pitch is thrown
You swing away
The ball went so far away
Then you here and see your team cheering
You just won on opening day.*

Ryan Zeimet
Senior





Kristen Moss '02

Kristen Moss
10th Grade

The Race

Bang, the gun sounds and everybody's off like a blur,
I'm going to do good, I know it for sure.

My goal was to finish in the top ten,
but know, half way through, it looks as though I might win.

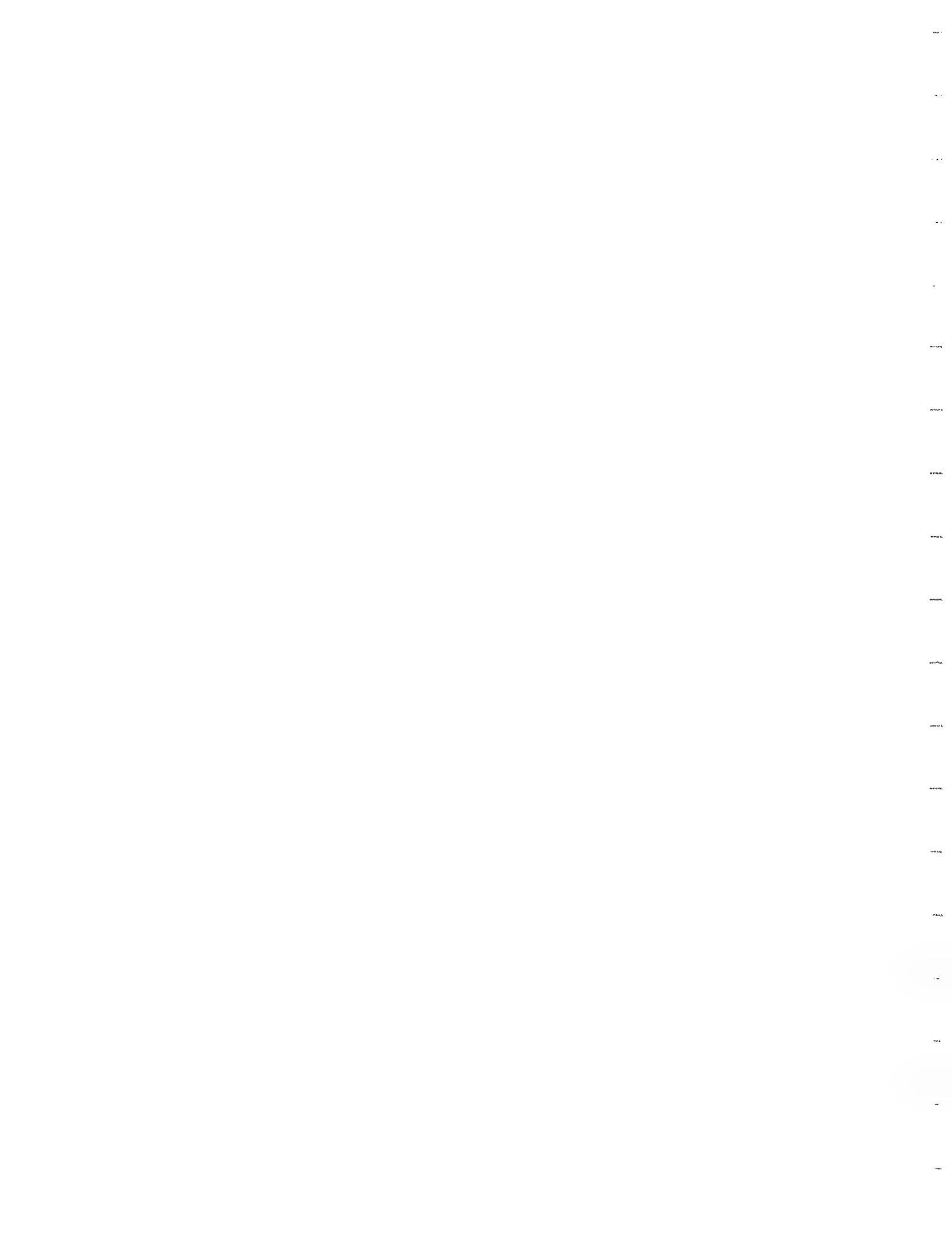
My body is weak, my legs begin to tire,
my feet start to feel like they're on fire.

As I run up a hill all my muscles are strained,
my legs are weak and I feel very drained.

Now I'm in first and the finish is near,
the roar of the crowd is all I hear.

I think I might win this race,
and I cross the finish line in first place.

Nick Swanson
Senior



For the Love of the Game

Some people are in it for the fame

Others are in it and get shamed

Others are in it to get the dames

Some have never even came

Some people are in it for the name

Most are in it for the same

But I am in it for the love of the game

**Nick Gries
Senior**





Eric Pohlmann
11th Grade

I~~B~~C Poem

By

Mike Farley

You've got Geometry

I've got an I~~B~~C

You've got Trigonometry

I've got an I~~B~~C

You've got chemistry

I've got an I~~B~~C

You've got a high school degree

I've got an I~~B~~C

You're a major in Biology

I've got an I~~B~~C

You've got a doctority

I've got an I~~B~~C

You've got a Harvard degree

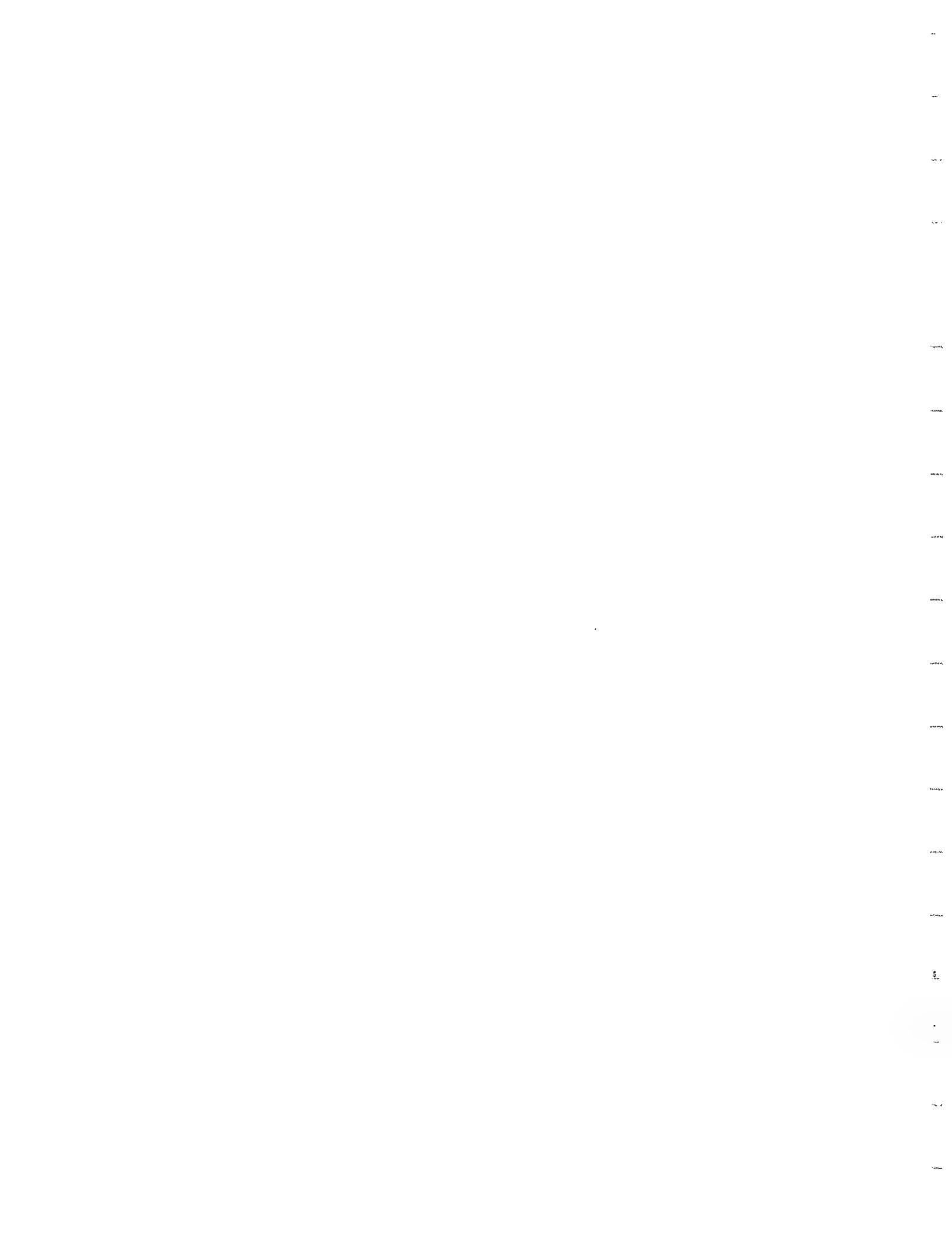
I've got an I~~B~~C

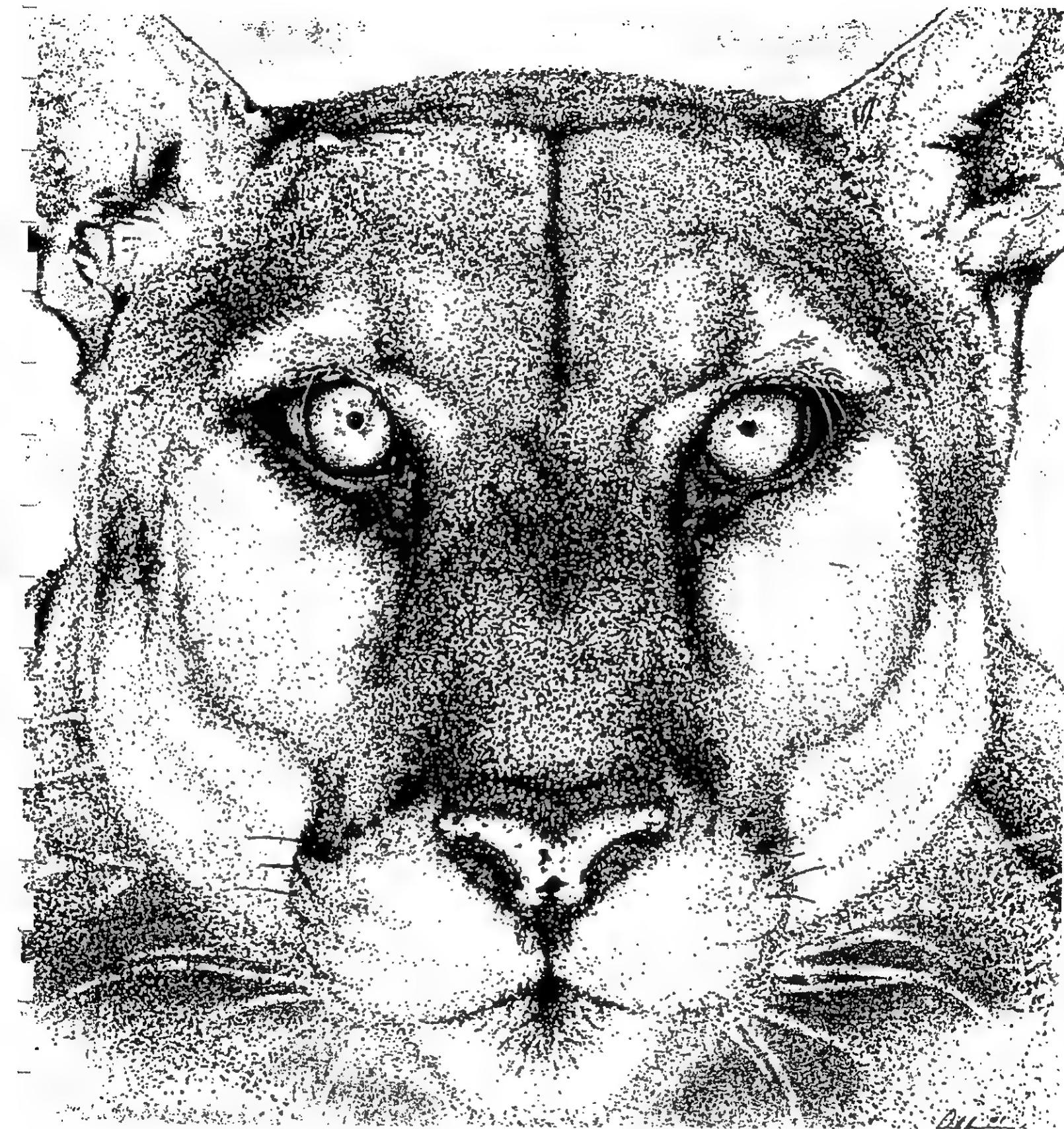
You own I~~B~~C

I've got an I~~B~~C

You just sold I~~B~~C

So I have no more I~~B~~C





Bell

Eric Pohlmann
11th Grade

Life is a Game

Life is a game
am I really gonna change
just to accept the fame.

Hell no I'm a simple man
just another person
searching for what I need most on this land.

God if ya feel me
Please don't miss me.
Send down a message so the people around can hear me.

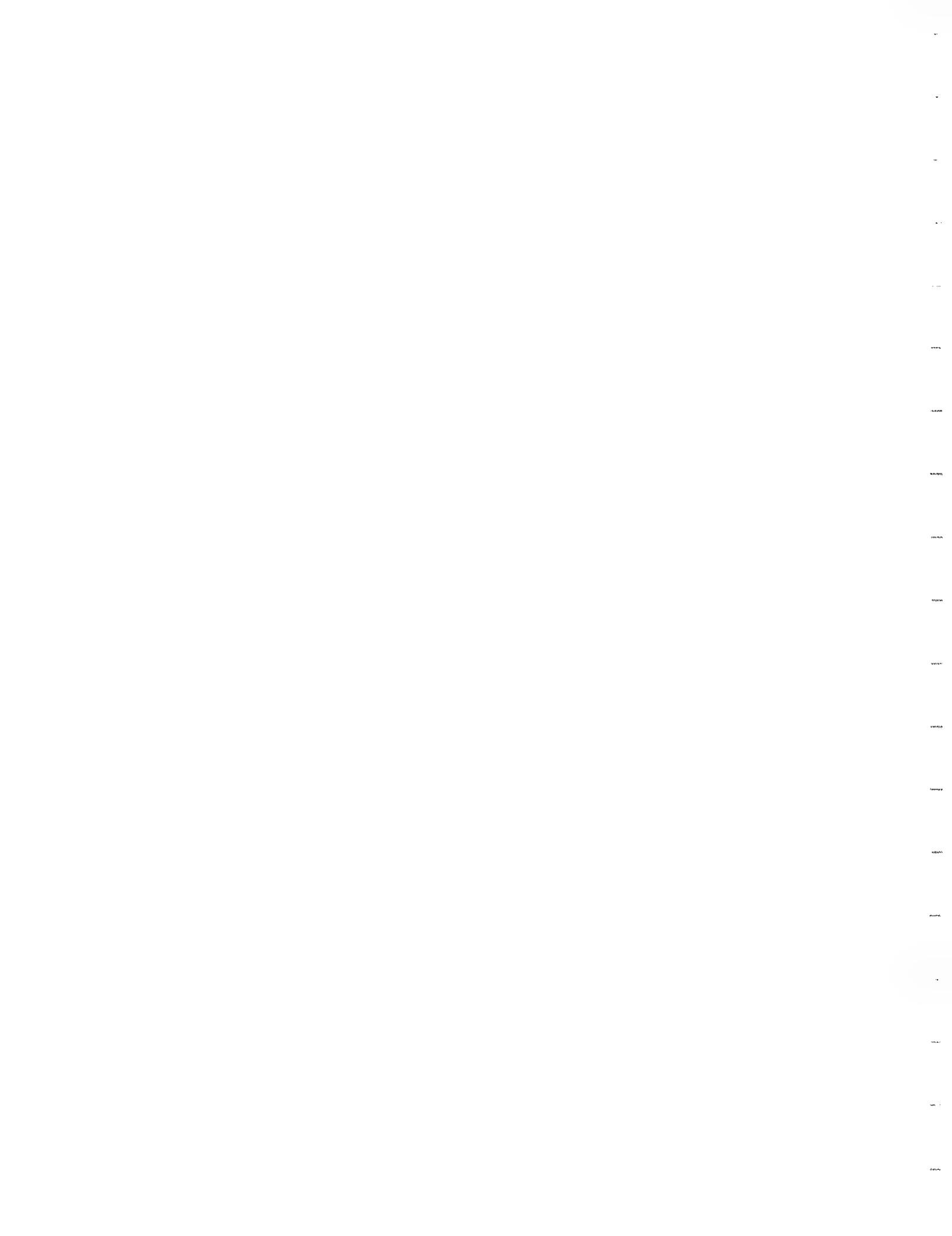
I feel I have a talent for what I do
tell me if ya think different
So I can find someone to help get me through.

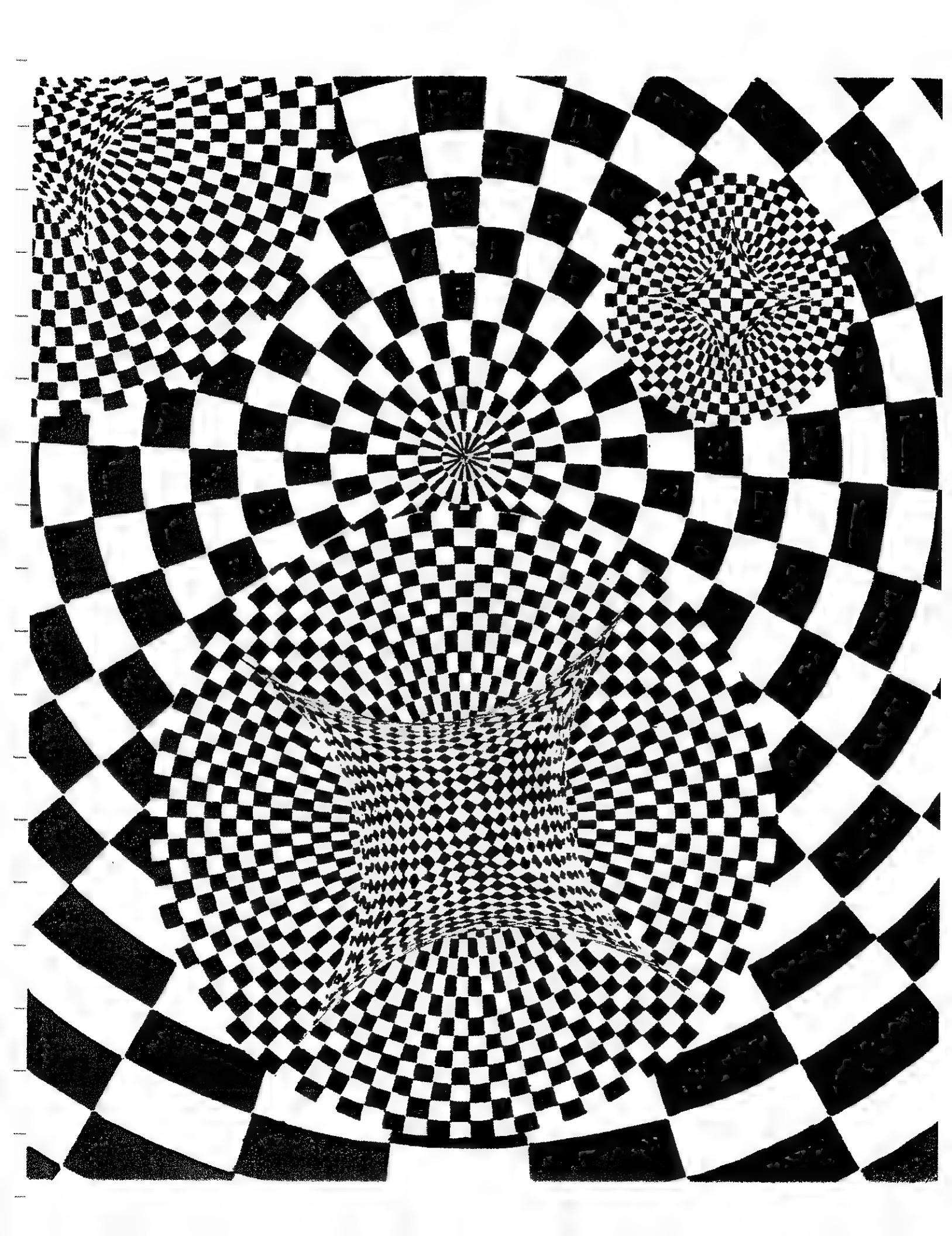
To the other side of life
don't ya find it really nice.
To give up your time, before you pass away.

This is the only way
yet I stand so far away.
I'm in this game not to play, just to live and see another day.

So this I must confess.
This will beat hard in ya chest.
I'll keep my mind for the best.
Until I find my final place to rest.

Eladio Pena
Senior





Todd Johnson
10th Grade

It Burns From Inside

It burns from inside,
It rages up from within.
Yet wears a mask, To hide its sin.

We all have suffered
Some dark day.
We're all its victims.
There's nowhere safe to stay.

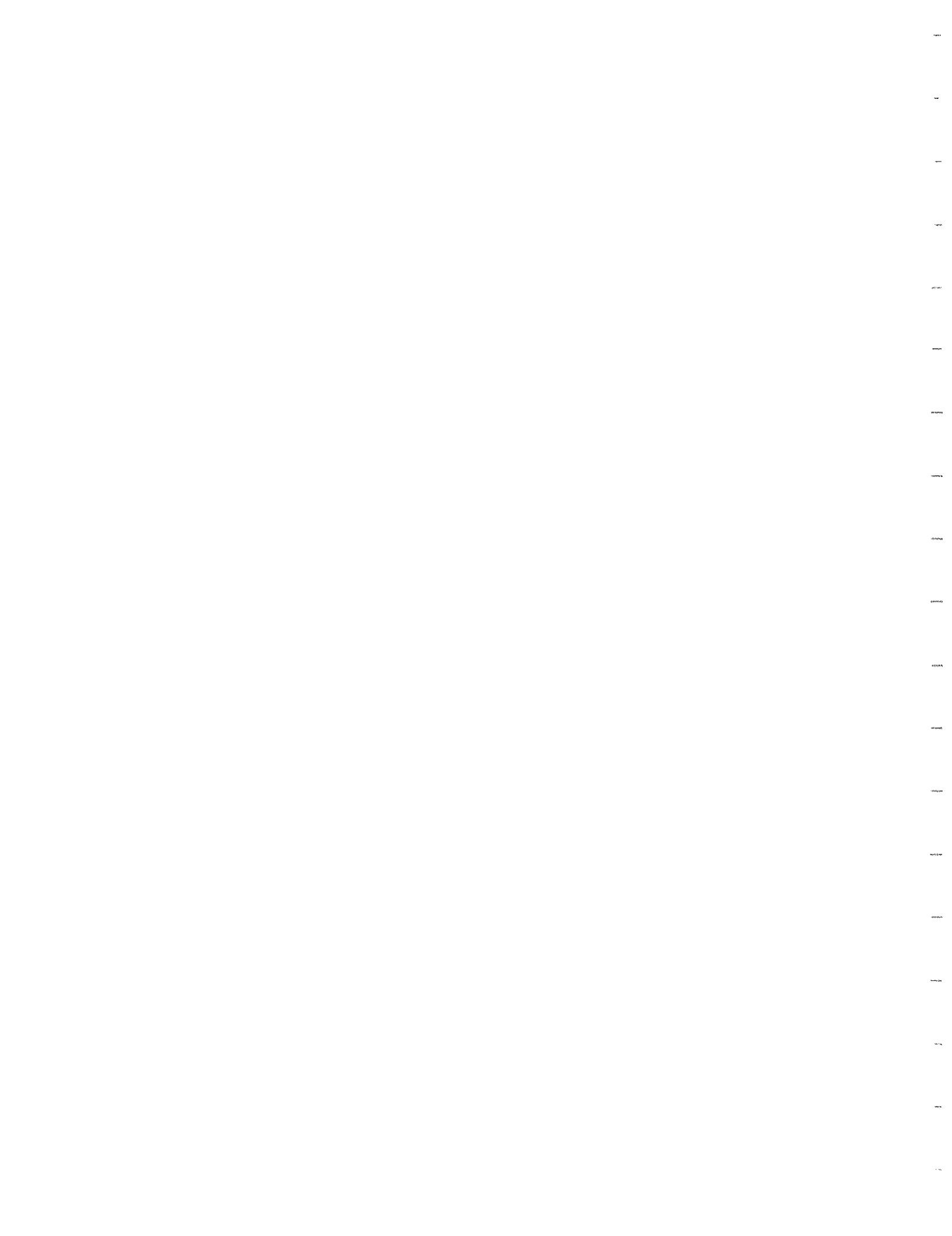
All have seen this terrible thing
Rear its monstrous head.
Some stay and face it,
But most hide under the bed.

Fear from this thing
Keeps us in silence.
Fear keeps us praying
To calm the violence.

We all have seen
Its fiery glow,
As it burns from inside,
Deep down below.

It rages around us.
Its powers are great.
That terrible thing
That we call HATE.

GJ Schaub
Senior



Confused

We met once,
And you caught my eye.
You called me up,
I felt as if I could fly.

We talked for hours,
As if we were old friends.
The conversation was great,
I didn't want it to end.

You called again,
We talked all night.
I didn't want to get pulled din,
I tried with all my might.

But we made plans to met,
It was so much fun.
I was getting in too deep,
I should have turned around and run.

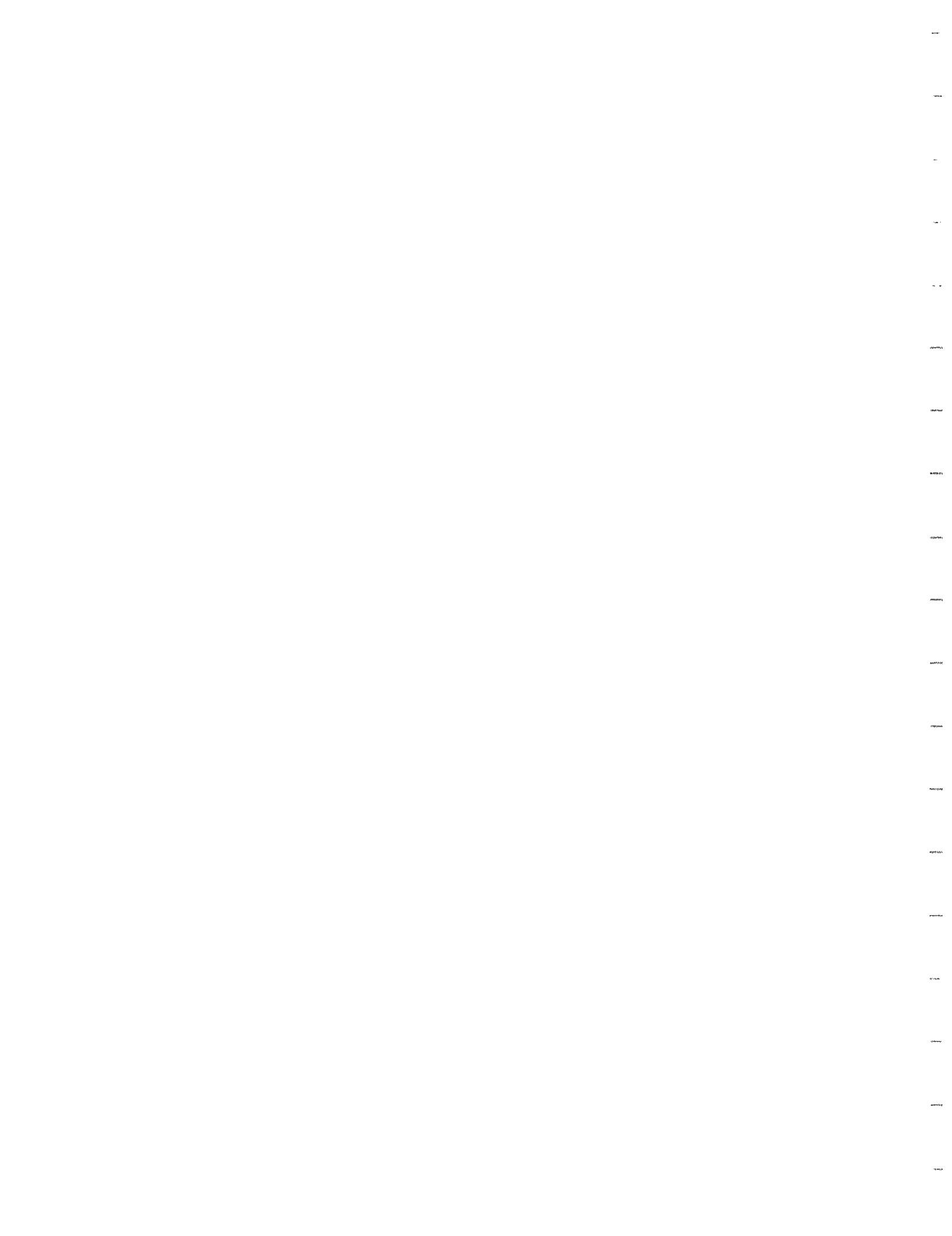
We then talked again,
About being more than just friends.
We both want to,
It seemed like a good plan.

Then we didn't talk about it,
I wondered if something had changed.
Was anything going to happen,
Would love be gained.

You called again,
We decided to be just friends.
To wait and see if anything happened,
I wondered if it would be the end.

You changed your mind so quickly,
I think that you were scared.
You hadn't been in too many relationships,
I think you were afraid to actually care.

That is alright though,
Not being afraid is rare.
When you realize what you really want,
I just hope that I am still there.





Kyle Schroeder
11th Grade

In Questioning

What is the meaning of life? What is our purpose here as human beings? Why do we see each passing day go before us?

To get an impressive job and make more money than anyone else, is that the reason? Should we look for positions that give us control over others? Are we here to grow up and do what everyone else has done but try to be better than others somehow?

Should we let ourselves be classified by social norms? Should the grades we get in school decide whether or not we are good people? Why do awards and merits mean that we deserve more happiness than others?

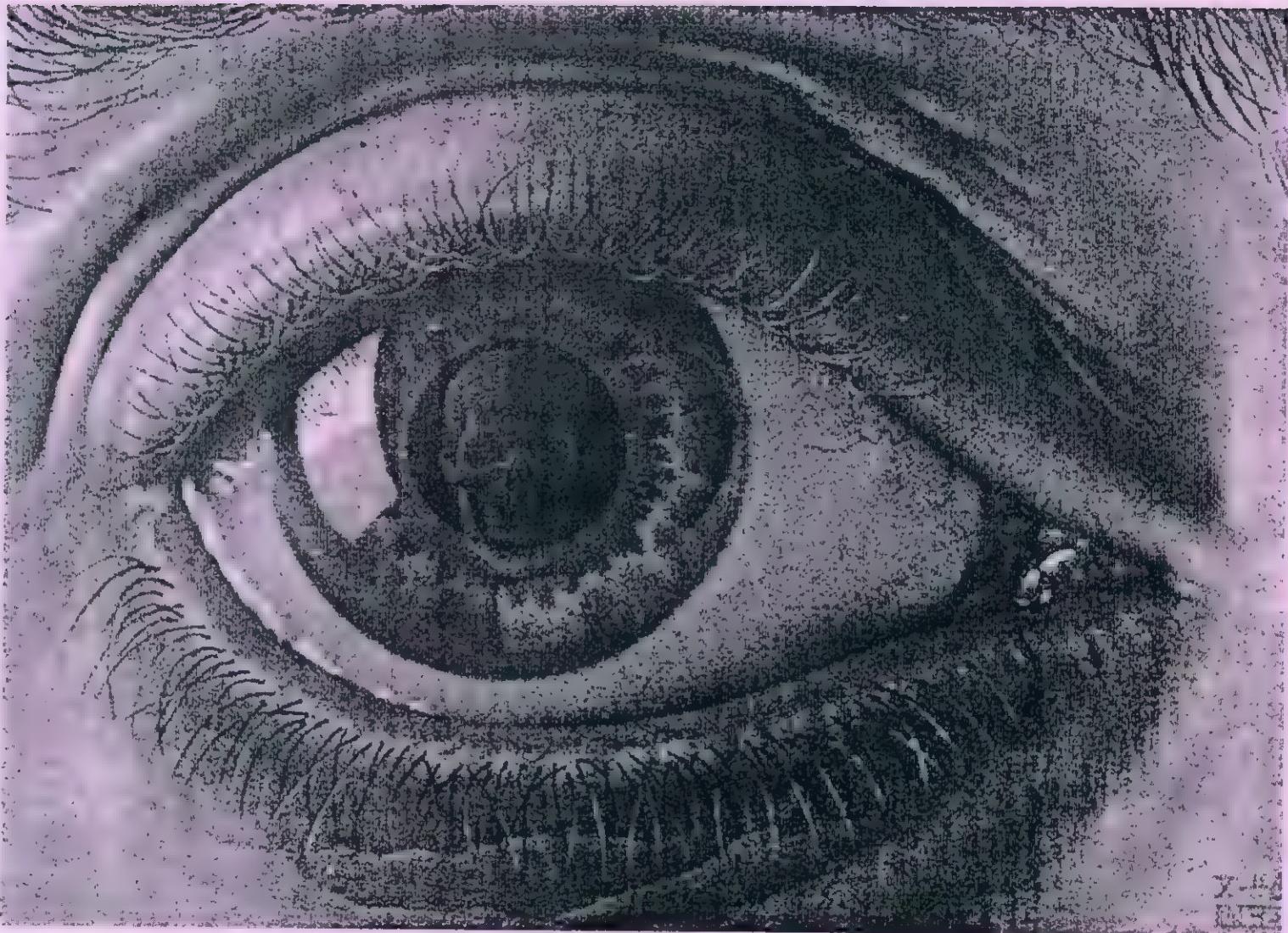
What good will all this do? In one thousand years from now will any of it matter? Will anyone remember you? Will status and power even be wanted? What will you get in return? Why does this seem to be the life goal of some?

What are the real things that matter? What is the most important? Why are we not working for that?

Laura Byrd
Senior



SHORT



STORIES



A City and Nature Medley

The beaches of San Diego, CA are the most dramatic places I could ever experience. People, lighting, and scenery play key roles in this popular setting. Activities never stop happening; the beaches never sleep. Moods vary with the sun and moon. If you seek action, travel to the San Diego beaches.

The boardwalk, just beyond the beaches atop a cliff, always bustles with activity; so much that the local government established a speed limit of eight miles per hour for the pedestrians' safety from bikers, skaters, and skateboarders. Even so, I always feel a burst of wind surge by me as a biker rushes from behind and disappears as a blur into the crowd. The boardwalk stretches on for miles, lined with hotels, restaurants, shops, and a tiny theme park. Screams reverberate off of the rickety wooden rollercoaster, along with other rides, within the theme park. The restaurants introduce cultures from sweet and sour Chinese to meat and potato Irish taverns. Hotels vary in size and accommodate a pool, which defies logic when there's an ocean right out the back door and down the stairs.

Following these stairs in the morning leads to peaceful beaches as rolling waves gently crash in a hypnotic rhythm. The roses and plums of each sunrise illuminate the lazy circling of seagulls in the crisp air. Salty breezes waft from the ocean, cooling my golden-brown skin from the heat already radiating from the daystar above. I behold a sole surfer catching an early wave. I feel relaxed

and detached from the motion remaining near the boardwalk.

The impression does not stick around with the coming of noon. People on the boardwalk flood down to the beach and slowly start to trickle into the ocean, desperate to find a haven from the fluorescent orb's torridity. The acrid water is refreshingly cold after sprinting across the scorching sand, littered with seaweed and shells. Scuba divers disappear in the water's murkiness. Surfers, swimmers, and boogie boarders fill the ocean with talking and laughter. The beach also stirs with commotion on account of shell seekers, sandcastle builders, volleyball players, and sun-tanners.

The beaches, ocean, and boardwalk don't get all the action, despite the popular perception. A pier also joins the fun. Small cottages decorate the edges, their roofs covered in seagull dung. Fishermen and tourists crowd any parts of this fancy dock not occupied by such cottages. A fisherman presents a beautiful trout in a tempting fashion to a potential customer.

An immense saffron sun lights these characters on a stage of earthly blues, greens, and tans. The fiery globe then proceeds to descend into the depth of the ocean in an amazing array of sapphire, orange, and scarlet. This advancement reflects as a thin shimmering line in the water. It appears as a bridge towards all dreams as it expands towards the horizon. The magic remains even after the path sinks, submerged with the fireball.

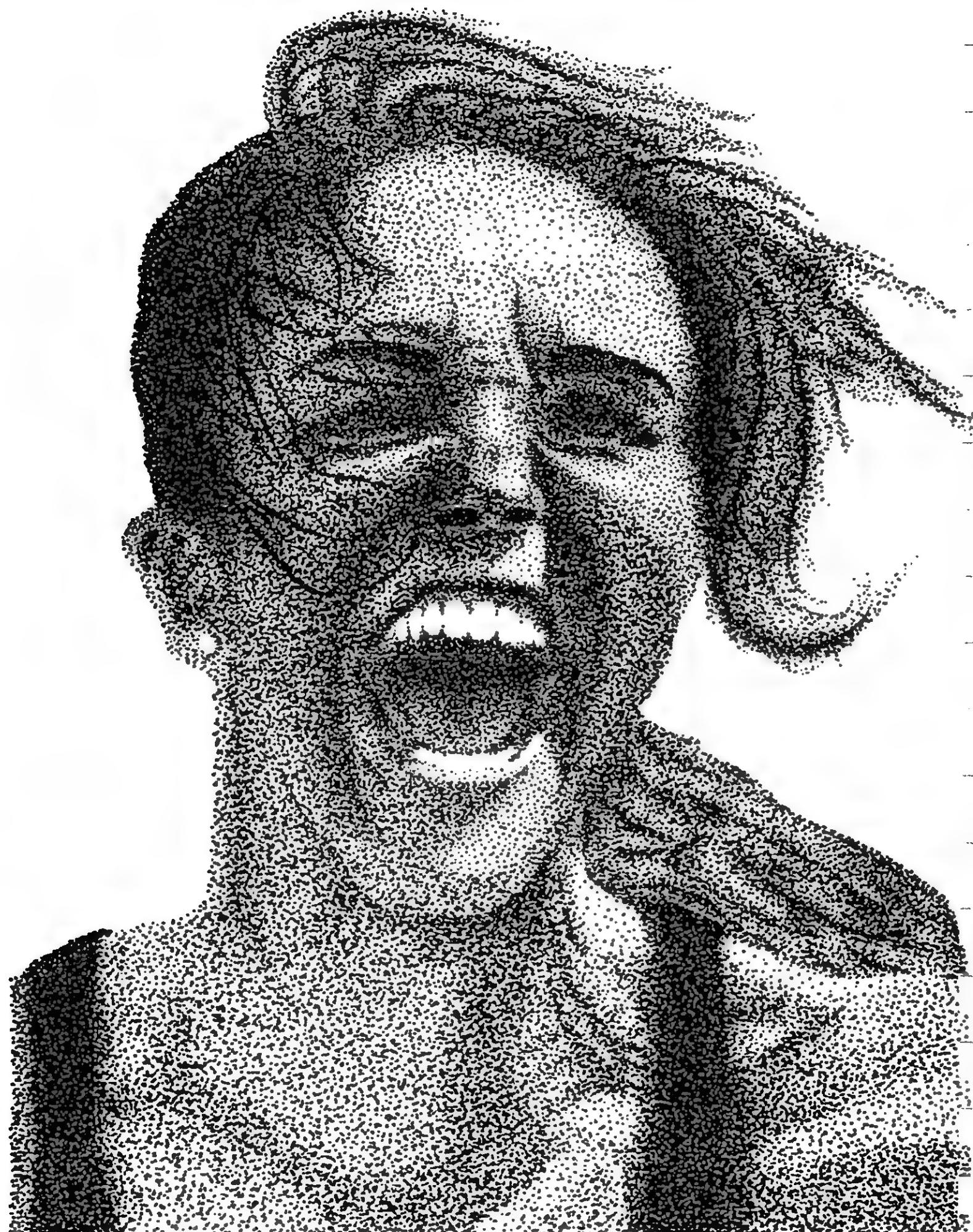
People do not leave when the sun diminishes. After all, the soft glow of

the moon and silvery shine of the stars provide plenty of light to continue the daily fun. Even on cloud-covered nights, bonfires become spotlights of liveliness. I become drenched with their wooden aroma as I listen to the sharp cracking of rising sparks. Stories echo in the wind throughout the night. The activity of people on the beach is much subtler than that afternoon, however.

San Diego beaches portray a combination of nature and the city. The variety of people creates an energetic aura of constant motion, supplying the beach and encompassing areas with ceaseless activity. With the meshing of a city, boardwalk, pier, beach, and ocean, San Diego portrays a lively and dramatic scene. Experience a lifetime of wonderful memories with ease in just one visit. The beaches of San Diego are where the action lies.

Jackie Pierick

11th Grade



One Month

On June 26, 2001, my boyfriend and I celebrated our romantic one-month anniversary. My first real relationship was with him. Maybe the age difference between us separated our relationship from all the others around us. Him being older than me changed my perspective on things; I felt more mature. He did seem immature at sometimes, but somehow it all came together beautifully.

He picked me up early that evening. We went to dinner at my favorite restaurant, Chile's. The friendly atmosphere with laughter filling the room, made it a relaxing place to eat. The most memorable things about Chile's, are the tables. The tops of the tables are made of decorative ceramic tiles. The designs on all the tiles differ from one another, yet seem to fit together. It's hypnotizing, trying to find a pattern. Yet, I find it inspiring. Little conversation was conducted at the dinner table. Still the atmosphere embraced us, allowing security in the silence between us.

After dinner, we went out to the movie theater. He wanted to see "The Fast and the Furious," again, so I agreed. After all, we did eat at my favorite restaurant. The absence of conversation went unnoticed while we held hands in the theater; I loved the quiet moments. When the movie ended, he informed me he had a surprise waiting for me. As we got into the car, he

pulled out a blindfold. He placed the blindfold across my eyes and tied it gently. As we drove down the street in laughter, he held my hand. My stomach filled with butterflies, but I felt secure. Even with the knowledge of people pulling up next to us, staring at me, and wondering why a blindfold lay across my eyes, didn't faze me. I felt completely ridiculous, but at the same time, I couldn't stop smiling. I actually trusted him, maybe more than anyone else in my life.

We finally arrived at our destination, but I still couldn't take the blindfold off yet! He walked me over to a certain spot, placed my hands on the metal railing, and removed the blindfold. There I stood, next to the river, staring at a brightly lit bridge containing hundreds of little tiny lights. I couldn't get my heart to stop beating so quickly. When I turned around, I saw a stereo with a bottle of sparkling grape juice and two wine glasses sitting on a small, metal bench. He turned on my favorite song, "Hopeless" by Train, and asked me to dance. There we danced on the sidewalk while people drove by with smirks on their faces. When the song ended, he poured the drinks, and we sat on the bench watching the river flow calmly. After a little while, we walked down the riverside, holding hands, and staying close to each other. Couples passed us by, smiling as if they knew how we felt. No words could begin to describe how I felt at that moment.

The ride home was quiet and peaceful. I thanked him for such a magical night. As we sat in the car in front of my house, we kissed goodnight and he told me he loved me. Happiness filled my heart. I replied that I loved him too. I'll never forget that feeling of unbelievable affection.

Even after we broke up, I still think of that night with complete happiness. The feeling of love will always stay with me. The hard times could never overpower the good. I loved him, and I believe he truly loved me. Nothing could ever ruin the memory of our one-month anniversary. I could never forget something that special.

By Rashell Stroud

Junior



A Summer to Remember

The summer of 1995 was a summer I will never forget. My family decided to move from Dubuque to Eldridge. To avoid the hectic days before the painful move, my younger brother, Kyle, and I decided to stay with our grandparents for a couple weeks. They lived on an enormous farm in rural Woodhull, Illinois. Their farm was very homespun and remote. Kyle and I always found a way to have a good time. However having fun often involved us getting into trouble.

One bright, beautiful, sunny day, my grandparents decided to go golfing at a nearby golf course. They told Kyle and I to stay in the house until they returned. My grandparents told us they would only be gone for a few hours. However we ignored what they said. The moment their rusty Eighty-eight Bonneville was out of sight, Kyle and I bolted out the front screen door, toward the battered and rundown wooden barn. We started up the noisy three-wheeler, and headed out to the pond.

The pond was a bumpy five minute drive from the house on the three-wheeler. The massive man-made pond was at the end of a crude dirt path that took us through dusty cornfields. Our adrenaline flowed rapidly as Kyle and I journeyed down the winding path. As we approached the pond, the two of us talked about considerable amount of trouble we could get in if we were

caught. Yet, these thoughts didn't change anything; we just wanted to have some fun.

When Kyle and I reached the pond, we stopped the three-wheeler, and grabbed two dilapidated fishing poles from the nearby ramshackle storage shed. We began fishing in our lucky spot where we always caught the most fish. However, the fishing was horrible that brilliant morning. So Kyle asked me if I wanted to go for a ride on the three-wheeler.

When we got to the top of the inclined hill, the three-wheeler suddenly disappeared. Kyle and I were shocked. The three-wheeler was nowhere in sight! We finally spotted it, partially submerged in water and sinking slowly into the murky and shallow end of the pond. As I gawked at the three-wheeler in astonishment, Kyle shouted, "We only have a little time until our grandparents get home!" This was the worst thing that ever happened to us. Yet, we were not going to give up. There had to be a way to get that damned three-wheeler out of the pond.

I came up with a clever plan. I started running back to the wooden pond to get my grandpa's tractor. Winded, I finally arrived at the barn. However, another problem arose when I tried to start the tractor, because I had never driven a tractor before. My grandpa was extremely adamant about letting Kyle and I drive his machinery; he gripped about it being too dangerous. With

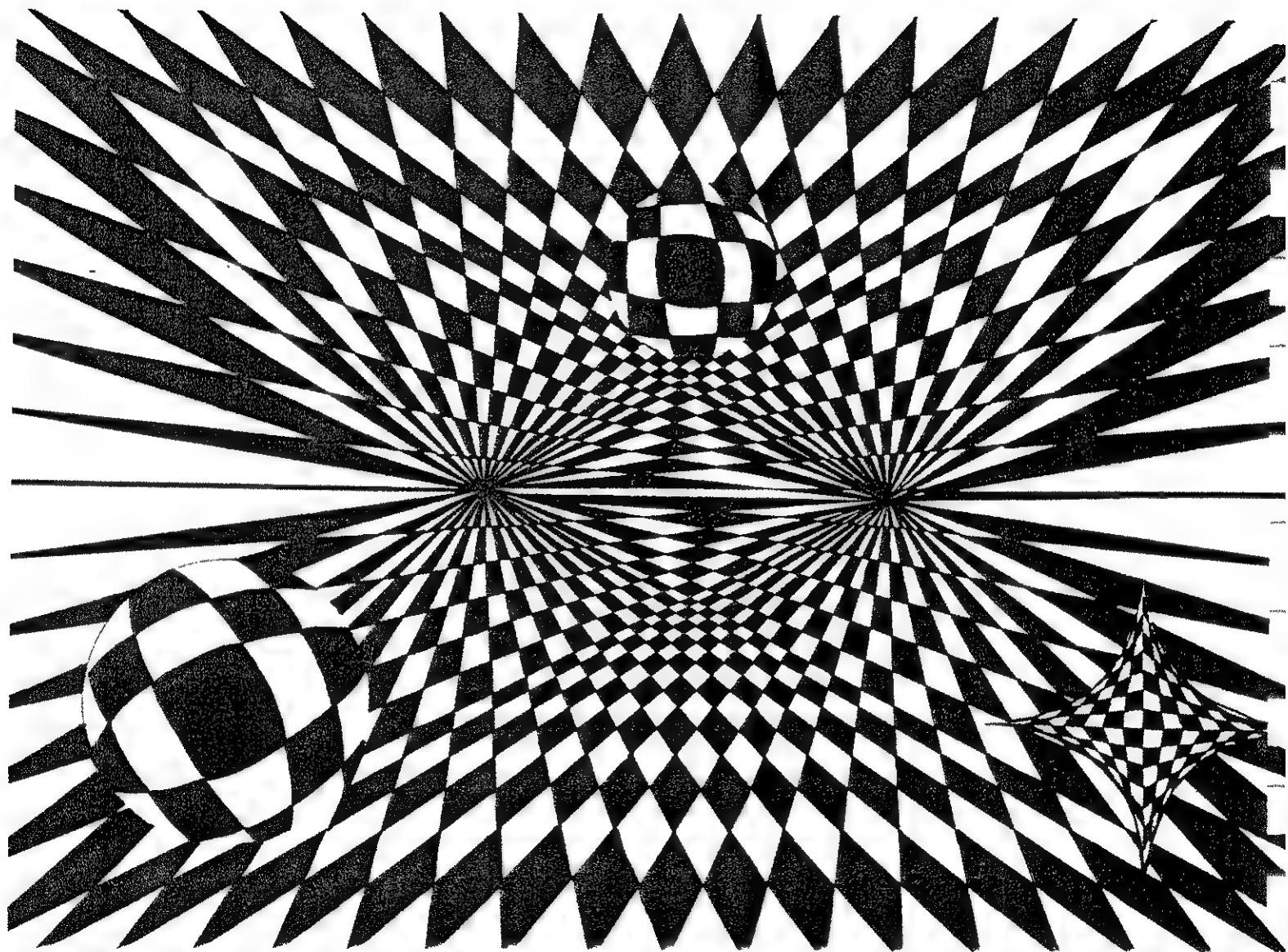
a little luck, I finally got the Johnny Popper started. I took off like a bullet towards the pond.

When I arrived, I could barely see the three-wheeler. It was sinking faster than the Titanic. Kyle was ecstatic to see me. We had to act quickly. We hooked a chain to the rusty handlebars of the three-wheeler. As I moved the tractor forward, the tires began to spin. The worn back tires of the very old tractor began to make deep ruts in the muddy bank. The three-wheeler would not dislodge.

After I cut the throttle, the tractor started rolling backwards. I quickly forced the throttle forward. Yet, before either of us knew it, the tractor was submerged along with the three-wheeler. Now Kyle and I were really in trouble; we thought our grandparents would kill us. As we sat on the bank thinking of another brilliant idea, we decided we had run out of options and had to get grandpa and tell him what had happened.

Shamefully, Kyle and I made the long trek back to the farmhouse. Luckily, grandpa was back. We told him the whole embarrassing story. To our surprise, grandpa understood our dilemma fairly well. Grandpa rescued the vehicles with his largest tractor, and our tragic experience was over. When we returned to the farmhouse, grandpa gave the two of us a pleasant look and said with a toothless grin, "boys will be boys."

By: Craig Rehn
12th Grade



The Rhapsody of Rhapsodies

I've played piano for 11 years now and it's still a great release for me. Whenever a problem arises and I need to get away, I go straight to the piano. Whatever the problem, regardless of its size, I can get lost for hours in a beautiful classical piece. However depressed I feel, I can always be soothed by music's healing powers, and just go to another world, where no one can touch or bother me.

When thinking of subjects I recall vividly, music comes to mind first. It's not really an event, but it touches me deeply inside. Music is a beautiful thing. It's an experience of indescribable joy. To hear a great musician weave his tale is an extraordinary thing. I can get lost in the beautiful web he spins. One minute he's screaming, unleashing fury and passion like no other, the next second a whisper, pouring his heart out right in front of you. As Rembrandt paints his masterpiece right before your eyes, you become sucked into the music, transfixed by a power higher than can be expressed in words. Twisting and turning, high and low, you can never tell where it's going next, but it always resolves.

Although it may sound like it, that's not even close to the best part about music, at least in my humble opinion. To me, performing is the best, and most rewarding, part of music. I feel right at home on stage. It's a wonderful feeling, such freedom, such a thrill. Everyone is there to hear you perform. The audience isn't there because they have to, they come because they love to hear what you do. It's a great feeling, but I wasn't always so relaxed on stage.

In the beginning, the stage is a horrifying thing. The spotlights feel like the stifling lights of an interrogation room. Your legs and hands starts

shaking, and you begin to feel the ever so familiar flapping in your stomach. Then, if the rest isn't bad enough, you have to start playing. Just a few days ago it happened to me at a honors recital. I got up on stage, and my fingers felt like jelly. I couldn't concentrate, didn't remember anything, and completely bombed. It was one of the most embarrassing experiences of my life, but whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger. I'm sure I'll be more prepared for next time. With repeated performances, these symptoms slowly fade away. The vicious spot lights soon turn from threatening, to tolerable, to comforting.

My favorite part of music is soloing. To some it's a frightening experience, but to me it's an indescribable thrill. I can feel the hundreds of pairs of eyes and ears watching and listening to me. and only me. On nights when I'm on, I can feel it, so can the audience, and the energy just rushes through me. It's a great thrill. I can feel every person in the room hanging on to every note I play. It's almost as if they're dependent on me to hear beautiful music, and that's what I try to do. The creative liberties of music are so awesome that I feel completely free.

Music is so moving, and is a gorgeous art. On a few occasions I've heard songs so brilliant, so moving, and so beautiful that chills ran up my spine and goose bumps appeared all over my arms. Some day I hope to accomplish something great; to write, play, or make something so beautiful that people in the audience get chills from listening to it. It's the most amazing sensation, like a cold winter's breeze running up and down your body.

To play in a group of people just like me, devoted to making beautiful music is wonderful. We all want to please the crowd, give them something to enjoy, and just for a good time. It's the sort of thing I know I want to do for the rest of my life.

By: Corey Kendrick

Junior



MY MARY

My Mary died on a Tuesday. I remember the day, seeing her go out the door, wearing the dress I bought for her years ago. When she left that day, I knew I should have said something. But I didn't. I sat at the table, eating away as she crept out the door. I only saw the dress from the corner of my eye. That was the last sight I ever saw of her. She was coming home from the museum when I lost her. My Mary.

It never occurred to me until now how much I missed my Mary. I missed her and there was nothing in this world that could take that sight away from me. I loved my Mary and she loved me. I know that now. I was to blind to see it. My eyes are wide awake and all I want is to fill them with the image of her. My Mary.

But there is a place in my heart that was hers. It was hers when we met, and it is still hers now that she is gone. Even this minute I can think of all the times that we shared together. All

the moments that we had. The world was ours to have, to touch. It was in our hands every moment we were together. Her and I. My Mary. I loved her then as much as I do now... But now I have a greater love for her. Why is that? Why is it we never really know we have until it is gone? Why can't we know that this is the moment when it is in our grips? I want to know. Is it God's will for us to learn from that. All that I have learned is my Mary is gone and that I can never have her back.

I stopped questioning. I never wanted to start the questions. for they were questions without answers. I have learned that through the time that she has been gone. I have learned a great deal of things since she left. In time I learned to sleep without someone near you. You can never know the feeling of loneliness until you share something with someone, and then to never have them there at all. I can remember the night of the funeral. I had a dream. I cannot think of what the dream involved, but once I woke up, I leaned over to her for comfort, only to find

the cold sheets that was nobody in the sheets. I stared at the sheets. I felt them. I wanted them to be filled. I needed them to be filled. I needed My Mary to fill them. I needed the sheets to layout the form of her body as they did every night wile she was alive. How I longed for her to be there. I waited. I waited for a long time just staring at the bed sheets, waiting for her to appear. She never did.

Life is a funny thing. I never have found the humor in it, but since the accident I learned how to laugh. They say that laughter is the greatest way to feel better. For a long time I could not laugh. It didn't seem right. I used to laugh for hours when my Mary would tell a funny story. It wasn't the joke that made me laugh. The jokes were never funny. It was her. The way that she told the tale. I never laughed at the jokes because they were funny. There has only been a few times in my history when I couldn't stop laughing and it was when she told the jokes that it happened. She made me laugh more then any one I knew. I...

laughed at her. The excitement that came in her eyes when she would tell those jokes made me feel alive, on fire. I can still hear her tell them, filled with the essence of blue. I can still picture the oceans in her eyes.

Once, as a little boy, my mother and father took me to the ocean. It was magnificent. I had never seen the ocean before, so this was to be the first time that I had seen an ocean. Of course, I had always heard about how blue the seas were, and when I got there, I found that they were black. It was close to dusk when we arrived and the sea was very harsh, to the point that they would not let me swim. I was crushed that day. Never had I built an event up so much as I did that day. I wasn't going home empty-handed. I ran down the beach, my mother yelling at me all the way, and picked up a shell. I had told all of my friends we were going, so I had to prove to them I was there. I grabbed the shell, and ran back. My parents gave me a scolding, but it didn't matter. I had the shell. This shell was my life at that moment. I looked at its outside and was amazed at how smooth it was. In one corner there was a speck of glass on it that had formed over years. My reason for getting the shell wasn't just to prove I was there, but to hear what the shell said. I never forgot a story my grandfather told me when I was about five. He told me if you put a shell to your ear, you will hear the ocean, No matter how far away from the ocean you are, you can always hear the sound from which it came. I put the shell to my ear. What I heard was not just the

sea; it was all that was in the sea. I could hear the sound of the shark hunting after the school of fish. I could hear the shrimp at the bottom of the sea, looking for a place to rest. Most of all, I heard the sound of a whale singing one of its songs to the world. All of those sounds came from the shell that day. On the day that I first saw my Mary, those sounds were there. I looked straight into her eyes and I tell you I saw that ocean in the dusk light . I heard the sounds of the whale and the shark. I heard all of them the moment that I looked in her eyes. I always heard it when I looked into her eyes. My Mary's eyes.

Life is not just funny for what happens; life is funny for the things that don't happen. Right now, as I get ready for life, I wonder what would happen if she was here, right in the room, getting ready. Would she go to the bathroom and take a shower? Would she get the clothes that she would wear that day, putting them on the bed? What? Again and again questions without an answer, because my Mary would do something different every time. In pondering since her absence, I believe that was the thing that I loved about her the most. She was so different from me. We never agreed on the same thing, from the food that we ate to the joys we had -- never could we come to an agreement, it was always the person who wanted it the most. That was the one who won. Usually it was my Mary. Whenever we would fight, I could never stand up to her beauty and her wit. She was always three steps ahead of me on everything. After every fight

came the time that we would make up.

It was our love. Some couples fight, others romance, and some don't say a single word. But after all things said and done, we would hug...

I miss that the most. I miss her feel. For every single piece of gold and diamonds on this earth, I would trade it all for just one single hug from her. A few seconds where our bodies connect and both of us are wrapped in each other's arms. There isn't a second of the day that goes by that I don't wish to make that dream come true. I know that it won't happen. She is gone. My Mary is gone. She has vanished like... tears in rain.

Sometimes I will sit in the dining room, eating my supper, thinking about my life without her: how it has changed, and in what way. For me the hardest thing to do is let go. I don't want to. People all the time tell me to move on. Stop living in the past. How dare they ask me to do that. I can't. She was everything to me. She was the reason for getting up; the reason for living, for breathing. Sometimes I wanted the world to just stop for five seconds so I can get all the things in my head together, but I scrap the thought. If I were to do that, then I would have stopped my Mary from living the life that she did. My Mary lived life to the fullest. That was why it hurt when I heard the news. She was coming home from the museum and bang!-- the car had run a red light. My Mary had a green light. She went into the street. The other car hit the driver's side head-on.

She died instantly. But I don't believe that. Not my Mary. She would have fought. She would have hung in there if she wanted to. I think she was robbed -- goddamit. She loved life. It was the true thing that was in her heart and she was robbed by the very thing that she loved; life. I was robbed of life. My Mary's life.

You see, it can be so easy to look at the other end of the glass and say that it is half full. But if you are in the glass drowning, I would want it to be half empty. I died that night. I had no more reason to live. That night I had a realization. Not only is life funny, but time is funny. Before I lost my Mary I taken time for granted. Now all that I can think about is, "When will it stop?" I want to be with her again, but it will be a long time before I can get to her again.

Time and life will, and always have gone, together. Always they go together in my life. Now, I have all the time in the world. Now I have all the life in the world. My Mary has none of these.

When I was at the funeral, all that kept coming back to my head was what could I have done before she left? What could I have done that would have made things better. What if I had said something to stop her five seconds earlier? I always said time was funny. What would have happened if my Mary had not done a certain thing that she did that day? Maybe she would have missed that car; or would have seen it coming. I had many questions that day, and I couldn't

find an answer for any of them -- except one. If I had to choose one day to relive, what day would that be? I knew the answer the minute the question was asked. The day after the wedding. The night before my Mary and I had made love to each other. It seemed like an eternity of passion and love. And by the time the sunrise came we were just lying there in the bed looking at each other. I stared into her eyes for hours, just listening to the sounds they made. It was amazing to hear that whale sing into the dark ocean. I could picture its immense body swimming and turning as if nothing mattered, humming all of its glory to the world. At that moment I knew that she was the one. I was looking into the eyes of the woman I wanted to be with for the rest of my life, the woman that I wanted to have children with, the woman who I wanted to go on walks with on a crisp autumn day, the woman who I wanted to grow old with. This woman, my Mary.

At that moment she saw in my eyes an expression she had never seen me with. She asked me if there was something wrong, but I could not answer her. I just stared in to the oceans of her eyes. It was at that moment that I think she understood what I saw in her eyes. I saw my love, not an ocean. and the whale was humming my heart beating every time that I saw her. She leaned my head to her and kissed me on the lips. For she knew that my love for her was strong. And until this day, I never realized how much her skin could warm mine. It was

soothing to feel her warm skin lay upon mine and how her body filled me with warmth and pleasure. All that I feel now is coldness. I am without my Mary.

I never liked to shave. It was always such a hassle, and every single day I would have to get up and shave again. Well, on the day after our honeymoon was over, I did not shave. I was free. My Mary loved me for who I was, so I thought that she would love me for who I was. I just didn't shave. I was getting ready for work when she came in the bathroom and saw the beard. I leaned in to kiss her but stopped. She was looking at the beard. To this day I can still feel those soft, warm hands caressing my beard. I could feel her cup her hands around cheeks and how her fingers moved down my neck, making lines in the hair. I felt her make out the lines of my jaw bone, my chin and then my throat. I closed my eyes and put my hands on hers, moving my hands wherever she moved. I opened my eyes to see her face. I looked at my oceans and heard the whale again. I loved her and she loved me. And it was that very scene that has stuck in my head to this very moment.

After the funeral I never missed a day without shaving. I can't explain why. I just never missed. Each morning I would get up and immediately I would go and shave. The reason wasn't because I had to shave for my work, or had to because I was seeing too many grays. No. It was the fact that I still could

feel her hands. My Mary's hands. When I wake up in the morning, I can sometimes feel her hands caress my face. I can still feel her fingers making lines in the hair. I get terrified. All the time I want her back, but the moment that I feel she is there I want her gone. My Mary.

I can remember the day that I first felt her hands. I awoke one morning a few days after her funeral. I had not left the house since the funeral. I had no reason to. I had no friends, my only friend was my Mary. She had a few friends, but they were not mine. I hadn't shaved since the funeral. I again found no reason to. My Mary was gone. There was no reason to shave. I walked to the bathroom to look at myself in the mirror. I never realized how bad I could look until that day. I looked at myself in the mirror. What has happened to me? I had never looked this bad in my life. I leaned in the mirror and looked at the beard. What was the matter with me? I had no idea of what to do. I was at the end of the line. I leaned my head on the mirror and went into a deep thought. I don't know how long I stayed there, pondering on what my life has come to. But once I started to realize what had happened, I felt them. I felt her hands on my beard. I don't know if it was a dream or if I was imagining the whole thing. Again, more questions that I could not answer. But the hands. They felt like hers. I lifted my own hand to my face. I could not feel a pair of hands, but I could sense that there was something there; something that was moving the hairs from

my beard. I started to think of the ocean. I saw myself in the orange dusk, picking up the shell on the beach. I saw myself, the boy, look towards the ocean and I saw the whale. I saw the whale come to the surface, spouting water and air from the snout. To me the whale looked as if it was miles and miles long. I reached out for the whale. It reached out to me with one of its fins pointed towards the beach. I sat down. In the back round I could here the sounds of my mother calling for me to come, but I just sat there, staring at the whale. I still reached for the whale's fin. But then I stood up and started to walk towards the whale. I walked on the ocean's surface. I didn't look down though. I was fixed on the whale and its fin stretching out to me. I finally looked down and saw glorious things. I saw dolphins swimming by at speeds so fast that I missed the direction they were going. I saw a shark swim through a pirate ship with the skeletons of pirates long since gone, knocking treasures onto the ocean floor. I saw fish, and eels, and jellyfish. Suddenly I was in front of the whale's fin. I reached out and touched it. The whale started to play the tune that I had imagined and heard singing each time I looked in the eyes of my Mary. I looked over into the whale's eyes and saw her eyes. The whale had the ocean eyes of my Mary. The song was beautiful. I sat down on the ocean floor and listened to the song. It went on for hours, days, years. I didn't care. It was the song of my love for her. My Mary. At a point that I don't know where, the whale put it's fin to my face and I was older.

I was the man that I was today, and on my face was the beard. All at once the music stopped. The ocean floor fell from below me and I was in the deep blue sea. I was terrified. All that I could think about was the shark and if it was hungry; or if the eels were going to attack. I was lost in a world of fear. I looked around to see a world of blue. I wasn't drowning. I was breathing in the water. I turned to find the whale again. I saw nothing. I yelled for the whale to come back, but nothing. The sea was getting darker and darker. I was sinking further down every second. Finally I saw the whale. I looked up and I reached for the whale. I started to swim towards the surface. I needed to see that whale again. I needed to hear that song. It was the song that drove them. I finally reached the surface and looked around. The whale was gone. I yelled once more and the whale rose from the ocean, its eyes right in front of my own. It reached its fin out of the water again and felt my beard again. I grabbed its fin much like I had done with my Mary's hands. The whale's fin went through the hair and made lines. I cannot tell you the feelings that through my mind in that moment. Some of the feelings I went through were wonderful. Others made me want to scream in pain. But that all stopped when the whale took the fin away from my face. I looked into the whale's eyes, and saw her eyes again. I knew what they were saying. I knew what I had to do. The whale went away into the sea. The last thing that I saw of the whale was its tale flying through the sunset's light and splashing back

down into the sea. I kept floating in that spot for hours never getting tired.

I came to, and realized that I was still in the bathroom, with my head still leaning on the mirror. How long I had I been there? I would have checked but I needed to do something. For I saw in the whale's eyes. I needed to do it. I had to shave the beard. My Mary never wanted the beard.

I opened the cabinet door and took the cream and razor, grabbing the shaving cream, I started to mix the cream. I mixed and mixed. I was so mad. Mad at the world for the way that it was. mad at life for being so damn funny, mad at my life for never being the way that I wanted it. I got so mad and all of that built up to the point that I needed the stop. I needed that five seconds to breathe and get my life together, and I couldn't. I could not stop it, just as I couldn't stop it when my Mary was alive. But why? She was gone. She was in a different world. She was in the world with the whale, singing her song that I long to hear. All of those thoughts came to me at once. It was too much, for the next thing I knew I dropped the bowl of cream on the ground. It shattered, throwing clay and cream everywhere.

I stopped. That moment made me realize that I had time to think this out. I had time to stop the world and think. I needed it to stop. I let it stop. I stayed there. I closed my eyes and thought. I can't think of the things that I thought of. Could have been about the whale. Could have been about myself. Could have

been about my Mary. Who knows? The next thing that I can remember was opening my eyes.

They had to be closed for a long time for the world was very blue. For a moment I thought, "This was the ocean again." I was just about to call for the whale again, but I looked straight ahead and found my reflection in the mirror.

I saw a man that day. Not just an ordinary man, but a man who had lost in his life. A man who had lost his time. A man who had lost his purpose, his will, his reason for being the man that he was. Most of all I saw a man who lost his one true thing that he loved -- his Mary. My Mary.

That moment I saw the cabinet was opened. I closed it. I opened it again and then I closed it. I opened it again, and then I slammed it. I slammed it again. I did that two, three, four times. Finally I slammed it so hard glass broke in the mirror. Pieces went flying everywhere. Some flew in the tub. Some flew, hit the toilet. Some went outside the bathroom. Most fell on the floor.

I stood there, looking at the broken glass on the floor, and noticed the reflection of the blue sky from the window. It made me think of sitting on that ocean floor. That was all that I could think of doing. Sit down. I walked to the corner of the bathroom and sat down. I started to cry. It wasn't because of the glass in my foot, or the realities that I had come to know. No. It was the fact that I knew who the whale was. It was Mary. She was in a new place that was close

to me. It all came together. the ocean was my heart; time was the predators that lurked from within; and my Mary was the whale that swam the depths of my heart. Whenever I needed her again, all I need to do is close my eyes and hear the tune that she plays for me-- the tune of my Mary

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